

**United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Criminal Investigation Division  
Investigative Activity Report**

**Case Number:**

1000-0494

**Case Title:**

Cooke Aquaculture Fish Farm Release

**Reporting Office:**

Seattle, WA, Area Office

**Subject of Report:**

2018-05-18 Phone Interview of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**Activity Date:**

May 18, 2018

**Reporting Official and Date:**

[REDACTED]

Agent

25-MAY-2018, Signed by: [REDACTED]

**Approving Official and Date:**

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

29-MAY-2018, Approved by: [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**SYNOPSIS**

On May 18, 2018, SA [REDACTED] and AUSA Seth Wilkinson conducted a phone interview of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED].

**DETAILS**

On May 18, 2018, AUSA Seth Wilkinson and I conducted a phone interview of [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]. After being notified of the identities of the interviewers and the nature of the interview, [REDACTED], in substance, provided the following information:

**BACKGROUND:**

[REDACTED]

**COOKE AQUACULTURE:**

[REDACTED] is familiar with the Cooke Aquaculture systems in Washington State and is familiar with the Atlantic Salmon release which occurred in August of 2017. [REDACTED] first became aware of the situation when he received a call from the Lummi Tribe with a request for [REDACTED] consultation services. The Lummi Tribe was requesting [REDACTED] assistance with the tribe's response.

There was a similar accidental release of Atlantic Salmon in the past from the net pens which are located

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near Manchester, Washington. [REDACTED] does not recall the amount or time frame, but the release was significant and the Atlantic Salmon once released, acted in an analogous manner. The Atlantic Salmon in that incident went both north and south from the net pens and were caught incidentally and in several other fisheries in Washington State. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**GENERAL THOUGHTS ON NET PEN ATLANTIC SALMON:**

This sort of release poses a real risk to the ecosystem and the native species of the Pacific Northwest. No one, even Cooke Aquaculture, knows the exact damage that could be occurring with the release of the Atlantic Salmon in August of 2017.

In [REDACTED] opinion, Cooke Aquaculture is acting as "business as usual" unless someone can definitively prove that there is a negative impact to Pacific Northwest Salmon. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

1.) There is a wide dispersal of the Atlantic Salmon. They have been caught in Canada and several rivers in Washington State.

2.) The long-term survival of these fish is of great concern. [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Inside of the Atlantic Salmon's stomach, small fish bones were discovered. This tells him that the Atlantic Salmon can survive in the rivers of the Pacific Northwest.

3.) [REDACTED] has not heard of any direct evidence of the establishment of the Atlantic Salmon in the rivers of Washington State, only anecdotal information of some existing in the waters around the Vancouver, BC area. It will take quite a while for these fish to establish themselves and it will be a while before we know the full extent of this last release. [REDACTED] believes it is only a matter of time, before Atlantic Salmon figure out how to survive long enough to establish themselves in these waters.

The establishment of Atlantic Salmon in these waters would be devastating to Pacific Northwest Salmon as Pacific Northwest Salmon are already in a fragile state due to loss of habitat, climate change and other issues. Several other non-native species of animals have been introduced into the Pacific Northwest ecosystem and governments are having to deal with very large impacts of these introductions.

If Atlantic Salmon were to become established in the Pacific Northwest, they would then be in competition with native salmon populations for food, habitat and possible transfer of disease. [REDACTED] does not know about

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species interbreeding, but [REDACTED] assumes that there must be some sort of interaction between the species.

4.) [REDACTED]

WDFW recently refused a transfer permit for Cooke Aquaculture because the young fish that Cooke Aquaculture was attempting to place in local aquaculture net pens were found to have an exotic disease. This disease is only found in Icelandic fish and is not found in fish of the Pacific Northwest. Disease transfer like this can have devastating effects on native salmon populations.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:**

Some people [REDACTED] would suggest that investigators contact regarding the Cooke Aquaculture release in August of 2017 and its possible impacts:

[REDACTED]

Jim Winton of the United States Geological Survey (USGS), who is a researcher in disease transfer.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]